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FOR ACTION

RECOMMENDATION TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Emergency Reserve Fund

The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve an increase in the annual level of the Emergency Reserve Fund from $4 million to $5 million beginning in calendar year 1991. The Executive Director further recommends that the Fund continue to be automatically replenished at the start of each calendar year by an amount corresponding to the disbursements authorized by the Executive Director during the previous year.

1. The Emergency Reserve Fund was established by the Executive Board in 1971 at a level of $1 million per year (E/ICEF/608, para. 277). In 1973, the Board directed that the Fund be accountable on a calendar-year basis (E/ICEF/629, para. 15).

2. In 1980, the Executive Board increased the Emergency Reserve Fund to an annual level of $3 million, beginning in calendar year 1981 (see E/ICEF/673). The Board also approved a procedure, which is still in effect, by which the Fund is automatically replenished at the start of each calendar year by an amount corresponding to the disbursements authorized by the Executive Director during the previous year.

3. The Emergency Reserve of $4 million was fully utilized in 1990, although special contributions, with the agreement of donors, eventually replenished several Fund allocations. The breakdown of allocations by country and the description of UNICEF involvement in emergency operations in 1990 is contained in document E/ICEF/1991/11.

4. Within its mandate, UNICEF continues to respond to the special needs of children and women affected by emergencies. The growing number, increased magnitude and duration of complex emergencies around the world has led UNICEF to play an increasingly critical role in responding to the humanitarian requirements arising from such situations.

5. Given the difficult political and socio-economic conditions currently existing in several regions of the world, it is likely that man-made, complex emergency situations will continue to occur during the 1990s. In the immediate future, there are clearly a number of situations where the demonstrated emergency response capacity of UNICEF will be sought or continue to be required by affected Governments.

6. While the international donor community has always responded to the needs arising from emergency situations and while other limited sources of funding are available from the diversion and reprogramming of regular programme resources, experience has shown that sufficient resources are always urgently required at the beginning of each emergency to allow for the rapid and effective start of emergency response activities, including the immediate provision of necessary relief assistance.

7. In order to enhance the capacity of UNICEF to respond to such emergency needs, the Executive Director recommends that the Emergency Reserve Fund be increased from a $4 million to a $5 million annual ceiling, beginning in calendar year 1991. The Executive Director further recommends the continuation of the procedures approved by the 1980 and 1989 Executive Boards, by which the Fund is automatically replenished at the start of each calendar year by an amount corresponding to the disbursements authorized by the Executive Director during the previous year.